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The Bookhams Bulletin

Quarterly Journal of the Bookham Community Association

No. 84

SEPTEMBER 1954.

22nd year



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CONTENTS

Polesden Lacey 1954 ...	7
Short History of Bookham	9
Village Day	11
Old Peoples Week	13
Choral Society	13
Bookham Jottings	15

EDITORIAL

We British people have become inured to the vagaries of the climate of these Islands, but even we have begun to feel that there is more reason than usual this year to grumble at the weather.

Looking back, it seems ironic that early in the year the authorities expressed concern at the smallness of the rainfall during the winter of 1953/54, and even hinted that unless there was considerable improvement in this respect during the next few months, some form of rationing of water in our big cities *might* become necessary during the summer. Those of us who live in districts where as much water as we need can be obtained by

the mere turning on of a tap are apt to forget that every drop of water we use comes in the first instance from the clouds. The serious comments on the lack of rain may have caused us a little concern at the time, but we soon dismissed it from our minds. And in any event, the rain came, and has remained with us.

In view of the disastrous effects of the heavy rainfall in various parts of the world, and the threat to our own harvest, it seems petty to grumble at the way the weather has interfered with our own enjoyment during the last few months. That mythical and cynical being, the Clerk of the Weather, must have given a more than usually sardonic smile when the organisers of various local outdoor functions proceeded with their arrangements for garden fetes, etc., in spite of the unfavourable weather forecasts. And practically every function has been adversely affected by the bad weather. The Red Cross Garden Fete, the Leatherhead Theatre Club's Theatrical Garden Party, the Effingham School Sports, the Bookham Flower Show, the Polesden Lacey Theatre produc-

tion, all were hampered by torrential rain. The only event which escaped a drenching seems to have been the Leatherhead Scouts' Fete in June, which was favoured by bright sunshine. Bearing in mind the generous way in which the Scouts have helped at functions run by other organisations, not only by lending their equipment, but by energetic personal service, perhaps they deserve their good fortune.

Unhappily, no such exception was made for Bookham Village Day, when the now familiar torrential rain fell continuously throughout the day. It says much for the public spirit of Bookham residents that the attendance was extremely good during the whole afternoon. The untiring efforts of the organisers did something to minimise the discomforts of those attending, but even so, the loyalty and goodwill of the population was a remarkable and a heartening thing. If other functions organised for the village as a whole are supported in the future in the same whole-hearted manner, our hopes for the growth and maintenance of a real community spirit in Bookham bid fair to be realised.

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POLEDSEN LACEY, 1954

One of the proudest achievements of the Community Association was the construction of the open air stage at Polesden Lacey where, year by year, it has presented one of Shakespeare's plays. On each occasion the production has been of high quality and the music to accompany it has been of equal level. Unfortunately, this year the weather proved unkind and, although advance bookings were up to standard, the attendance on the day was considerably reduced and a financial loss was sustained. Such hazards have to be faced in all open air events in our uncertain climate, and the Community Association has always been alive to this possibility. It is very unlikely that this single setback will deter them from carrying on with the development of the Polesden Lacey Theatre, for which there is undoubtedly a wide and enthusiastic demand.

The main impressions carried away from "The Tempest" presentation this year were of the gallantry of the players, who carried on through rain and cold, and of the appreciation of the audience who, despite a drenching, stayed to the end and obviously enjoyed a well-knit production in which the acting was vital and vigorous and yet polished in every detail. Ariel's exquisite movements and the nostalgic cadences of his lines will linger in our memory for a long time. The dignity of Prospero, the grace of Miranda and the rhythm both of speech and ges-

ture of all the actors will also long be remembered. Shakespeare in his day must have known foul weather as well as fair. We do not know the response of the audiences of his time, but it can be truly said that the players at Polesden on July 3rd charmed us into ignoring the rain, and this is the greatest tribute that could be paid to them.

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION NEWS

By the time this issue of the "Bulletin" is in the hands of readers, the winter activities of the Community Association will be in full swing. The Council's plan is to provide some form of entertainment for all ages and all tastes, and for the benefit of newcomers to the district particulars are given below of the various clubs, together with the name and address of the Secretary in each case.

Gramophone Club

The Gramophone Club endeavours to fill the continuing need to meet others of similar tastes to share the enjoyment of good music, performed by the finest orchestras and artistes and reproduced on good equipment. The Club meets on alternate Thursday evenings at the Old Barn Hall, the new season commencing on September 2nd at 8 p.m. The first programme will consist of ever-popular "requests." Newcomers will be welcomed, and should contact the Hon. Secretary, Mrs. Everett, Brandreth, Sole Farm Road, (tel. : 2404).

Over 20's

This Social Club, which is open to anyone between the ages of 20 and 60, meets every Tuesday evening in the Old Barn Hall, from 7.30 to about 10.30 p.m. Light refreshments are served, and newcomers are always made very welcome. The Hon. Secretary is Mrs. Wood, Woodford, Leatherhead Road.

Over 60's

This popular Club meets every Tuesday afternoon at the Old Barn Hall, where the members play cards and games, and arrange little entertainments. At a social afternoon recently members provided solos, there was a male voice trio and recitations, and a three-act charade. On the recent outing to Worthing, members were favoured with one of the really fine days of this deplorable "summer." Owing to lack of space, unfortunately no new members can be accepted at present, but any "Over 60" can have his or her name placed on the waiting list which is being compiled, on application to the Secretary, Mrs. Perry, at Abinger, Dorking Road.

Table Tennis

This Club, which meets in the Old Barn Hall, is unfortunately at present unable to accept any new members. Applications to be placed on the waiting list will be accepted by the Hon. Secretary, Miss E. Benn, 11 Lower Road, Fetcham.

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Old Time Dance Club

The new season commenced on September 1st, and classes are now held at the Old Barn Hall every Wednesday from 7.45 to 10.30 p.m. Beginners can learn to dance under the expert instruction of Mrs. Olga Clarke, who is partnered by her father, Mr. A. Smith, both qualified teachers of Old Time Dancing. The Club holds dances on the second Saturday in each month at Church House, commencing on 11th September. Music is provided by Mr. George Davies' Band, and evening dress is optional. It is hoped that many of the young people in the village will join in the classes and dances. Further information can be obtained from the Secretary, Mrs. D. Dunmur, 2 Dowlans Close.

Badminton

This Club meets at Church House every Tuesday, and arranges matches and tournaments. The Hon. Secretary is Miss J. Gurnham, White Lodge, Dorking Road.

In addition to the activities mentioned above, the Community Association has arranged to hold a social event every Saturday night at the Old Barn Hall. This will be mainly modern and square dancing, and is open to the general public. Suggestions for other activities of interest to residents in the Bookhams will be welcomed by the Hon. Secretary of the Association, Mrs. Harrison, Common End, Eastwick Drive.

A SHORT HISTORY OF BOOKHAM, SURREY

PART V

BY JOHN HARVEY, F.S.A.

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While Bookham had made great progress in the twelfth century, still evidenced by the structures of the two churches, the thirteenth saw the achievement of an urban status hardly warranted by the facts, and unequalled in later times. For on the 15th of June 1243, Henry III granted to Abbot Alan of Chertsey and the convent there the right to hold a market at their manor of "Bookham" every week on Tuesday, and a fair for two days every year on the eve and day of Michaelmas. The annual fair had dwindled to one of a single day on Michaelmas by 1548, and died out soon after 1792; the weekly market cannot be traced in later records, and it is likely that it soon fell out of use. But the fact that it was ever granted proves that Bookham under the rule of the abbots had made great advances in prosperity at the very time that Leatherhead was declining from its ancient status as the county town.¹ This is confirmed by Bookham's network of roads already described, and certainly in full use at the time.

The earliest of the Bookham charters copied into the Chertsey Cartulary² is of the time of Abbot Martin (1197-1206) and records a grant to William "chaplain" of Bookham of one acre of land which Gilbert le Huchier held and on which the said William

has built his houses, and 22 acres next Pollesden Wood on the left hand of the road which leads to Dunleye. The witnesses to this grant, made at Chertsey, were not local men, but the next deed, granted by Abbot Adam (1207-1223) is witnessed by a whole series of parish chaplains including "E. chaplain of Bocham" (presumably Edward). In this charter John Saracen of Bookham and his wife Beatrice, daughter of Roger de Esse (Ash), obtained five acres which had belonged to Therric the bailiff, and the messuage which Robert, son of Gonnilde had held of the abbot in the township of Bookham, to be held by rent of 2s. 6d. In the fifteenth century these lands belonged to Edmund Shaa, trustee for John Norbury, who had acquired the Polesden estate in 1470 from Thomas Slyfield.

The early history of the main Slyfield estate, at the north end of Bookham, is obscure, but it may have been the half-hide of land "in Slifeld" disputed between Robert, son of John and Adam de Aldham in 1207-08.³ Before the end of the century it was in the hands of William de Slifeld, a witness to local deeds as late as 1301,⁴ and who may have been the son of Geoffrey and Alice de Slifeld, living in the district in 1262.⁵

¹ See *Proceedings*, Leatherhead & District Local History Society, vol. 1, no. 1 (1947), p. 11.

² Public Record Office, E.164/25.

³ *Curia Regis Rolls*, vol. V, pp. 119, 205, 273.

⁴ Deed of Adam le Yunge, "Slyfield Chest,"

Surrey County Record Office, Kingston.

⁵ *Surrey Fines* (1894), p. 41.

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Little Bookham continued in the family of Hansard, one William Hansard being mentioned in 1189 and another at several dates between 1210 and 1244. This William's sons, Sir John Hansard (died 1275) and James Hansard, and the latter's son James (born 1245), held the lordship of Little Bookham from the Honor of Bramber as subtenants of the family of Braose until about 1300.

At the other end of the social scale, serfs were disposed of or mentioned by several of the deeds enrolled in the Chertsey Cartulary. Abbot Alan (1223-1261) acquired from Alda Bluet of Bookham the latter's bondman Richard de la Watere, while Abbot John Medmenham (1261-1272) exchanged a certain "nativus" Ralph Blunt "with his appurtenances in Great Bookham for ever" for two "nativi" or "villani" of Henry de Doune, namely Thomas de la Sale of Eastwick and Gilbert Broune of Preston. In 1292 Abbot Bartholomew de Winton granted to Peter atte Felde of Bookham a tenement once of Gilbert atte Felde, with a message of land which Robert and John, brothers of Peter, had held in bondage; Peter was to pay 6s. rent yearly. In this and many other instances substantial money rents were taking the place of services, long before the great pestilence of 1349. But earlier plagues may have had something to do with the grow-

ing freedom from servile status, for in 1292 the abbey was allowed to appropriate the revenues of the church of (Great) Bookham, void by the resignation of John de London, late rector, on condition of presenting a suitable vicar to perform the services: the reason given was that "the funds of the monastery have decreased in various ways, both by exactions and by pestilences and inundation of waters affecting the animals, flocks and other things."⁶ Although a few labour services on the demesne lands survived after 1300, the essential change to a money economy had already taken place in thirteenth-century Bookham.

VILLAGE DAY

The earnest hopes of fine weather for Bookham Village Day were doomed to disappointment, but the drenching rain which fell almost continuously throughout the afternoon did not appear to dampen the enthusiasm of the many hundreds who attended the fete and exhibition.

The opening ceremony was performed by Dr. J. E. Morgan, Chairman of the Leatherhead Urban District Old People's Welfare Committee, who took the opportunity of thanking the Community Association for promising to donate half the profits of the function to the building fund which is being started to provide a local Old People's Home.

Preceding the opening ceremony was a Fancy Dress Parade and Competition. The parade

was marshalled by Mr. A. E. Browning and the costumes were judged by Mrs. Boardman. The prizewinners were: Janet Newman (Hawaiian girl), Raymond Wall (miner), Paul Talbot (chef), Maureen Warren (Ready for Anything), Gillian Van Scolina and Jennifer Randall (Tweedledum and Tweedledee), and Colin Wheeler (Golliwog). The decorated pram competition prizes went to Rosemary Thompson and Gillian Longhurst and the adult fancy dress prize to F. Hole as an old time butcher, with D. Francis second as Nell Gwynn. The Pets' Corner attracted a number of entries under the guidance of Miss Rogers, of Fetcham, and prizes awarded were: Cuddliest pet, 1, Mrs. Pinder (Irish terrier puppy), 2, J. Griffin (three-legged rabbit). Most comical, 1, Beverley Croft (chameleon), 2, R. Dummer (catfish). Most handsome, 1, Miss Shaw (Pekingese), 2, Diane Crumbelholme (rabbit).

The theme of Village Day this year was "Bookham at work and at play." In the Barn Hall itself the admirably staged exhibition of local industries, and some with a wider appeal, aroused considerable interest. Leisure was demonstrated in a marquee, and the various exhibits of work and play have already been fully described in the local press.

Great credit is due to the organisers and their helpers who had worked so untiringly to make Village Day this year a success. Naturally, in view of the bad weather, the profits were not as

⁶ Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1281-92, p. 493.

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great as had been hoped, but even so the Community Association has been able to hand a cheque for £20 (the promised half of the profits) to the Leatherhead Old People's Welfare Committee, towards the building fund for an Old People's Home.

OLD PEOPLES' WEEK

An Old Peoples' Week will be held in the Leatherhead District from October 2nd to October 9th. Organised by the Leatherhead and District Old People's Welfare Committee, of which Dr. Morgan is Chairman and Mrs. N. Cox the Secretary, it will cover all four wards and the proceeds will be devoted to the needs of old people throughout the area.

A programme will be on sale nearer the date detailing all the events. A mile of coins will be started on Saturday, October 2nd, and a Grand Bazaar at the Christ Church Congregational Hall, Leatherhead, will conclude the week on Saturday, October 9th. It is hoped to stage an exhibition of the work of the Over-Sixties and to arrange a Brains Trust in which well-known personalities will appear. Several organisations and clubs have promised to co-operate by putting on events in their own district, and it is expected that many more will volunteer in the next few weeks.

The organising committee believe that there will be a fine public response to this appeal for help in a good cause. The main objective of the week is to raise

funds for an Old People's Home for the residents of the four wards of the Leatherhead Urban District. Most of us know of lonely old people among us, incapacitated by ill-health or disability, who can no longer carry on alone and who are without near relatives, to whom such a home would be a haven. By voluntary effort Epsom has provided a home for its old people, so has Dorking. The Old People's Welfare Committee are convinced that the people of Leatherhead will welcome the lead now being given to found a home in their own neighbourhood. It is hoped that the fund raised will be substantial enough to warrant the preparation of plans and the selection of a site.

Offers of assistance with the bazaar, with the exhibition, or in any other direction, will be gratefully received by the Hon. Secretary, Theldor, Keswick Road, Bookham.

BOOKHAM CHORAL SOCIETY

That the Choral Society did not fare very well at last season's Leith Hill Musical Recital was due to a number of factors, chief among which were the difficulty of the music and a fall in our numbers. As a result, we have gone back to Villages Division I, which we left a few years ago, where we anticipate music of not so exacting a standard. In fact, it is probable that the music selected this season will be less

difficult in all Divisions, as we were not alone in our protests on that score. We hope that one consequence of the move will be to give us more time to enjoy our weekly practices, and to pay more attention to our other activities, such as the Annual Concert, and our Carol Service at Christmas, which has by now also become an annual event.

We hope that with this change more singers will come forward to strengthen the Society. In a community growing at the rate ours is doing, it should surely be possible to find more people to take part in what is one of the pleasantest, most harmonious, and yet inexpensive of pastimes.

In these days, when so much entertainment is being offered for the turning of a knob, it behoves every one of spirit to recognise the dangers of a purely passive part, and to seize the opportunities that Societies such as ours offer to take an active part in their own entertainment, finding therein a far greater satisfaction than in any merely passive role.

To all who have an interest in singing, we offer a warm welcome. Our season starts on Monday, 27th September, at the Congregational Hall, Eastwick Road, at 8 p.m., under our new conductor, Mr. Ralph Nicholson, A.R.C.M., of the London Symphony Orchestra. Further information will be gladly given by the Hon. Secretary, Mr. L. R. Neville, Lone Pine, 202 Lower Road, Great Bookham. L.R.N.

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BOOKHAM JOTTINGS

Dedication of Parish Church Window

On Sunday, 13th June, the Bishop of Guildford (the Rt. Rev. H. C. Montgomery Campbell) dedicated the new window which has been placed in St. Nicholas' Church as a memorial to the Duchess of Beaufort and some 80 parishioners. The window replaces one damaged by a flying bomb during the war. The colours and figures of the six panels of XVth century glass, which come from Costessy Hall, Norfolk, are extremely beautiful. The names of those whom the window commemorates were read by the Rector (the Rev. Canon A. M. Hughes) and the service was conducted by the Rev. E. Ryerson. In spite of extremely bad weather, there was a large congregation, which came from all parts, including London and Bournemouth.

Meals on Wheels

We are asked by the W.V.S. to state that the Meals on Wheels Service for old people now operates in Bookham on Wednesdays and Fridays (and not on Tuesdays and Thursdays, as stated in our last issue). If any Bookham residents know of old people who would like to avail themselves of this service, will they get in touch with the Centre Organiser, W.V.S., "Wayside," The Crescent, Leatherhead (tel.: 2207).

Workers' Educational Association

We have been informed that the new Secretary of the W.E.A. is Mr. G. T. Totman, 76 The Street, Fetcham (tel.: Leather-

head 2037). The Workers' Educational Association, which is the foremost voluntary body in the sphere of adult education, is strictly non-party and non-sectarian, and organises lectures, discussions and classes in cultural subjects.

British Red Cross Society

The Bookham Detachment (Surrey 26) of the British Red Cross Society, which has been in abeyance since the resignation of the former Commandant, Mrs. Brown, has now been revived, and regular detachment meetings will be held each month, commencing in September.

The Detachment is arranging for a course in Home Nursing, which will be held in the afternoons, commencing early in October. Anyone interested should get in touch with the new Commandant, Mrs. Barfield, Merrilees, Maddox Lane, Little Bookham (tel.: 3204).

Readers are reminded that sick room requisites may be borrowed from the Red Cross, and are obtainable locally from Miss C. Shosmith, Oakdene, Oakdene Avenue (tel.: 54).

Seat in Memory of Mr. E. C. Hall

The Leatherhead Urban Council has gratefully accepted the gift of a seat from the Bookham Brotherhood in memory of their late President, Mr. E. C. Hall. The seat has been placed in the Bookham Recreation Grounds.

Friends of the Elderly

This little Group has now been in operation for 12 months, and in a quiet way has done a great deal of useful work among the

old people in Bookham. There is, however, an urgent need for more male helpers, to visit old and housebound men. These elderly men, many of them over 80 and confined to their homes through bodily infirmity, are hungry for a little male companionship. The warm welcome they give to a regular visitor speaks volumes for their pleasure in this kindly service. Any man willing to give an hour once a week, either in the afternoon or evening, to visiting someone in this category is invited to get in touch with the Hon. Secretary, The Haven, Downs Way (tel.: 2648).

Cheap Evening Fares to London

Cheap evening fares are now available to London from all Southern Region Stations in the London Transport area. Tickets will be issued for all trains leaving after 4 p.m., and passengers can return by any train the same evening.

Mr. Turville Kille

Congratulations to Mr. T. Kille, only son of Mr. and Mrs. Kille of Great Bookham, who has gained his B.Sc. (Agriculture) and is leaving shortly to take up a farming appointment in New Zealand.

Mr. M. H. Rogers

Congratulations also to Mr. M. H. Rogers, of Great Bookham, on whom the London University has conferred the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Mathematics. He obtained his B.Sc.(Hons.) in 1951. Dr. Rogers has accepted an appointment in the Department of Astronomy at the University of Illinois, U.S.A.

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